

INTRODUCTION

The word Gita means a song. The Indian holy Scriptures were written in songs, and each was attributed to a great sage, or to an Incarnation of God, called an Avatar. The best known of the Gitas is the Bhagavad Gita. Among the Gitas the least known are the Shiva Gita, Rama Gita, Vyadha Gita, and Devi Gita. The theme of all the Gitas is the non-dualist philosophy of the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita came into prominence when the greatest of the Indian teachers, Schankaracharya¹, wrote a commentary on it, acknowledging its great metaphysical and devotional value. Another reason for its popularity is that its teachings are universal. The beginner in metaphysics, the layman, the highest initiate, and the greatest philosophical genius can find food there for his spiritual nature.

The Avadhut Gita is a special classic which is meant for the use of those advanced students of Indian metaphysics who have learned self-control to an appreciable extent, risen above the prejudice of this or that religion, and made the ultimate Reality - Truth - their sole God; it is for those who practice detachment in daily life, and are eager to realize God at any cost. The narrow worshiper, the fanatical adherent of an exclusive creed, the one who loves anything but the highest knowledge, the megalomaniac and the egotist will find the study of this Gita brings him little satisfaction.

It is a well known classic among the high Yogis, Sannyasins² and sincere aspirants. In the calm of the Himalayan valleys, on the banks of the holy Ganges, one often hears this Gita sung by the Yogis, Sannyasins and Brahmacharis³. The great teachers who have thrown away all books, having found everything worth knowing in their hearts, still keep this little Gita in their caves and huts.

The lower form of prayer consists of singing hymns and repeating mantrams⁴ in which the ultimate Reality, the secondless, all-transcending Brahman⁵ is conceived in terms of duality.

The higher form of prayer consists of feelingly singing of Brahman in terms of non-duality, and in the first person, "Shivoham," I am Shiva⁶ (Bliss), "Aham Bramhasmi," I am Brahman, and so forth. Our inner life is covered by those attributes of God which we repeat or of which we sing. The Avadhut Gita speaks of the ultimate reality in terms of absolute freedom.

The aim of life is to realize the Truth and to be eternally free. Purification of the heart is essential to this realization. Practice of virtue, devotion to God, pilgrimages and other religious practices, are useful only so far as they purify the heart from the taint of *meum* and *tuum*, and bring before us the great vision of Truth, which makes worldly achievements mediocre and ultimately valueless.

1 Schankaracharya was the greatest of the Indian philosophers. He lived probably in the seventh century A.D. He was perhaps the first exponent of Vedic idealism in philosophic form. He silenced all opposition to the Vedic theory of idealistic non-dualism by traveling through the length and breadth of India, and holding controversies with the learned. His commentaries on the Vedanta Sutras, the Upanishads and the Gita are an immortal monument to his genius. (Schankaracharya is said to have begun to read the Vedas at the age of three, become a sannyasin at the age of nine and realize the ultimate Reality at age sixteen, remaining, thereafter, ever abiding as the Self. He founded 10 monastic orders in a short life span of 686-718. He also wrote several books, including "Viveka Chudamani", Crest-Jewel of Discrimination.

2 Holy Renunciate

3 Neophytes

4 A mantram is a Vedic formula, the repetition of which, according to approved rules, induces spiritual consciousness, and also psychic powers.

5 Brahman comes from the root meaning majestic, and in philosophy is applied to the Absolute, transcending all thought and feeling and all attributes, it can be spoken of rather provincially as Sat, Chit and Ananda, i.e., Existence Absolute, Intelligence Absolute Bliss Absolute.)

6 "I am Shiva" (the Destroyer aspect of the Hindu trinity, notably the destroyer of ignorance).

They create in us an undying desire to realize truth, but the direct cause of realization of God is within, is knowledge of Truth. Knowledge is the magic wand which frees the spirit of peace and Ananda from the rock of personality, covering the fearing ego into a conflagration, burning up all duality and its cause, ignorance.

The Avadhut Gita contains this knowledge in its purest form. The word Avadhut means a high Renunciate, a Mahatma⁷, one who has found unity with God, and lives a life of perfect freedom, uninfluenced by ignorance and its effects.

Who was this Mahatma Dattatreya, who gave this priceless gift of the Gita? There is no other writing attributed to him. When and where he lived cannot be said with certainty. To some Yogis and devotees he is an immortal, and they still see him and talk to him. In a temple, among the calm and beautiful peaks of the mountain called Girnar, a bed is made for the Mahatma daily.

It is clear that he was an historical person, and not a mythical Mahatma, and that he lived after Shri Krishna⁸, that is, a little over three thousand years ago. From the fact that most of his devotees live in the Bombay presidency we can infer that he lived in Western India. There are many legends about his miraculous birth and life, but they do not take us far.

There is a mention of the Avadhut in the Eleventh Book of the Shrimad Bhagavata, a great Indian classic of devotion and metaphysics, attributed to Vyasa, written in a highly poetic style in pure modern Sanskrit. The following is an extract from this book:

“Salutations to you, O Sage, Kindly tell us what Guru has given you the great knowledge which has made you perfect in wisdom, full of peace, and devoted to the good of all living beings.”

This was the reply of the Avadhut:

“One’s own Self is one’s chief Guru. By knowledge of Self alone through perception, inference and mystic communion one obtains the great bliss.”

He further said that he did not learn from one particular source, but from many teachers, each source of knowledge being his Guru. He then mentioned twenty-four special teachers. Of them, the following are worthy of note:

Water, the earth, the wind, space, the moon, the sun, the sea, and the arrow-maker.

From water he learned purity and the taste of tastelessness. “As water is sweet and pure, so is Atman⁹. Man should manifest sweetness and purity in his conduct. I have therefore taken water as one of my Gurus,” he said.

“Patience, forgiveness, supporting others without expectation of gratitude I have learned from my Guru, the earth.”

“The wind blows everywhere, over the flower-beds, deserts, marshes, palaces and prisons, without being attached to any of them, without preference or dislike. So, I, an Avadhut, go everywhere, scattering my blessings of peace, without being attached to anyone. My Guru, the wind, has taught me this lesson.”

⁷ “I am Brahman.”Mahatma, lit, great soul, a perfected man.

⁸ Shri Krishna - the teacher of the Bhagavat Gita, the recognized Supreme master of Indian Yoga and philosophy.

⁹ Atman - The Divine Self

In the all-pervading space there exist clouds, stars, planets, dust-storms, and so on, but it is not touched by any of them. So is Atman, which, pervading all bodies of men and animals, of saints, sages, kings, madmen, sinners, and paupers, is untainted by any of them. So do I feel, having learned this lesson from space, my Guru."

"As the moon is perfect, in spite of its waning and waxing, which do not exist in it, so is Atman ever perfect, in spite of its seeming imperfections. This is what the moon, my Guru, has taught me."

"As the sun through its rays absorbs water from the earth, only to give it back in a cool and pure form, so ought a Mahatma to take the things of the world, not for his own sake, but in order to give them back in a richer and better form. This is what my Guru, the sun, has taught me."

"Though thousands of rivers empty themselves into the sea, yet it remains within its limits; so remains undisturbed the mind of the knower of God, though objects of all kinds pour themselves into it. Thus, the sea, my Guru, has instructed me."

"From the arrow-maker I have learned the value of concentration. In a certain town there lived an arrow-maker, who devoted his full attention to his occupation. Once he was beating the point of an arrow, when the king and his procession went by the street. He was so attentive to his work that he knew nothing of the king's passing, and when they asked him how he liked the music of the procession he said, 'What procession? When did it pass?' So ought we to concentrate on the Truth that no external object or event should disturb us."

The teachings of Rishi Dattatreya are similar to those of Vasishtha, Loatzu, Abu Ben Adhem, and Jajaluddin Rumi. There are still many Paramahansas¹⁰, Bramacharis and Yogis who follow the path of spiritual solitude. Many such Mahatmas have been seen in the Himalayan woods, in the forests of Szechwan province of China, and near the Koyasan in Japan. They are free from the pairs of opposites¹¹, established in Atman, and radiate peace and spiritual upliftment. They do not shun human society, and yet they do not relish it. Of them it is said:

"Heed then no more how the body lives or goes;
Its task is done; let karma float it down;
Let one put garlands on, another kick
This frame; say naught. No praise or blame can be
Where praiser praised and blamer blamed are one.
Thus be thou calm, Sannyasin bold, and say,
OM TAT SAT OM."

The Avadhut Gita breathes the purest spirit of Shri Schankaracharya and the sages of the Upanishads.

¹⁰ Paramahansas - Those who have realized the highest Self [and whose Sahasrara - Thousand Pedaled Lotus (the brain) is completely filled with Light

¹¹ Pairs of opposites - such as heat and cold, love and hate, grief and joy, etc..

Chapter I

1. By the grace of God the Brahmins above all men are inspired with the disposition to non-duality (unity of the Self with God), which relieves them of the great fear.
2. How can I salute the Self, which is indestructible, which is all Bliss, which in Itself and by Itself pervades everything, and which is inseparable from Itself?
3. I alone am, ever free from all taint. The world exists like a mirage within me. To whom shall I bow?
4. Verily the one Self is all, free from differentiation and non-differentiation. Neither can it be said, "It is" nor "It is not." What a great mystery.
5. This is the whole substance of Vedanta; this is the essence of all knowledge, theoretical and intuitional. I am the Atman, by nature impersonal and all-pervasive.
6. That God who is the Self in all, impersonal and changeless, like unto space, by nature purity itself, verily, verily, that I am.
7. I am pure knowledge, imperishable, infinite. I know neither joy nor pain; whom can they touch?
8. The actions of the mind, good and evil, the actions of the body, good and evil, the actions of the voice, good and evil, exist not in me (Atman). I am the nectar which is knowledge absolute; beyond the range of the senses I am.
9. The mind is as space, embracing all. I am beyond mind. In Reality the mind has no independent existence.
10. How can it be said that the Self is manifest? How can it be said that the self is limited? I alone am existence; all this objective world am I. More subtle than space itself am I.
11. Know the Self to be infinite consciousness, self-evident, beyond destruction, enlightening all bodies equally, ever shining. In It is neither day nor night.
12. Know Atman to be one, ever the same, changeless. How canst thou say: "I am the meditator, and this is the object of meditation?" How can perfection be divided?
13. Thou, O Atman, wast never born, nor didst thou ever die. The body was never thine. The Shruti (revealed Scriptures) has often said: "This is all Brahman."
14. Thou art all Brahman, free from all change, the same within and without, absolute bliss. Run not to and fro like a ghost.
15. Neither unity nor separation exist in thee nor in me. All is Atman alone. "I" and "thou" and the world have no real being.

16. The subtle faculties of touch, taste, smell, form and sound which constitute the world without are not thyself, nor are they within thee. Thou art the great all-transcending Reality.

17. Birth and death exist not in the mind, not in thee, as do also bondage and liberation. Good and evil are in the mind, and not in thee. O Beloved, why dost thou cry? Name and form are neither in thee nor in me.

18. Oh my mind, why dost thou range in delusion like a ghost? Know Atman to be above duality and be happy.

19. Thou art the essence of knowledge, indomitable, eternal, ever free from modifications. Neither is there in thee attachment nor indifference. Let not thyself suffer from desires.

20. All the Shrutis speak of Atman as without attributes, ever pure, imperishable, without a body, the eternal Truth. That know to be thyself.

21. Know all forms, physical and subtle, as illusion. The Reality underlying them is eternal. By living this Truth one passes beyond birth and death.

22. The sages call Atman the “ever-same.” By giving up attachment the mind sees neither duality nor unity.

23. Concentration is not possible either on perishable objects, on account of their mutability, nor on Atman. “Is” and “is not” do not apply to Atman either. In Atman, freedom absolute, how is Samadhi¹² possible?

24. Birthless, pure, bodiless, equable, imperishable Atman thou knowest thyself to be. How then canst thou say: “I know Atman,” or “I know not Atman.”

25. Thus has the Shruti spoken of Atman; “That Thou art.” Of the illusory world, born of the five physical elements, the Shruti says: “Neti, neti” (not this, not this).

26. All this is ever pervaded by thee as Atman. In thee is neither the meditator nor the object of meditation. Why, O mind, dost thou shamelessly meditate”

27. I know not Shiva¹³,
How can I speak of Him?
Who Shiva is I know not,
How can I worship Him?

28. I am Shiva, the only reality,
Like unto space absolute is my nature.
In me is neither unity nor variety,
The cause of imagination also is absent in me.

12 Samadhi - A high state of consciousness.

13 Shiva - a name for Brahman

29. Free from subject and object am I,
How can I be self-realizable?
Endless is my nature, naught else exists.
Truth absolute is my nature, naught else exists.

30. Atman by nature, the supreme Reality am I,
Neither am I slayer nor the slain

31. On the destruction of a jar, the space therein unites with all space. In myself and Shiva I see no difference when the mind is purified.

32. Brahman alone is, as pure consciousness. In truth there is no jar, and no jar-space, no embodied soul, nor its nature.

33. There are no worlds, no Vedas, no Devas, no sacrifices, no castes, no family tribes, no nationalities, no smoke-path, no shining-path.

34. Some there are that prize non-dualism, others hold to dualism. They know not the Truth, which is above both.

35. How can the supreme Reality be described, since It is neither white nor any other colour, has no qualities such as sound, and is beyond voice and mind?

36. "I eat," "I give," "I act"; such statements do not apply to Atman, which is purity, birthless and imperishable.

37. Where the one Brahman alone is, how can it be said "this is Maya¹⁴", or "this is not Maya", "this is shadow" or "this is not shadow"?

38. I am without beginning and without end. Never was I bound. By nature pure, taintless is my Self. This know I of a surety.

39. From subtle substance (mahat) down to formed creation, there is nothing but Brahman; most clearly do I see this. Where then is the division of caste?

40. The absolute void and its opposite, all am I everlastingly.

41. Atman is not male or female, nor is It neuter; neither is It happiness or suffering. How dare ye pervert It?

42. Atman is not purified by the six methods of Yoga. Absence of the mind makes It no clearer. The teachings of a Guru reveal It not. It is all purity, in Itself, by Itself.

43. I am neither bound nor free. I am not separate from Brahman.

44. Neither the doer nor the enjoyer of the fruits of karma am I. The pervader or the pervaded I am not.

¹⁴ Maya is the creative power of the Lord, the means by which the phenomenal world has been brought into existence.

45. As a volume of water poured into water is inseparably united with water, so, I perceive, matter and spirit are one.

46. Why callest thou Atman personal and impersonal. Since thou art neither bound nor free?

47. Pure, pure thou art, without a body, unrelated to the mind, beyond maya; why art thou ashamed to declare: "I am Atman, the supreme Reality"?

48. O my mind, why dost thou cry? Realize thy Atman, o Beloved; drink the timeless great nectar of non-duality.

49. Knowledge born of the intellect am I not. By nature Truth eternal am I. I am perpetual immutability.

50. Neither formless nor with form, described by the Vedas as "Not this, not this," free from separation and unity, the true Self reigns supreme.

51. There is no father, no mother, no kinsman, no son, no wife, no friend, no prejudice, no doctrine. Why art thou disquiet, o my mind?

52. Why do the wise imagine the bodiless Brahman to be a body? In It there is neither day nor night, neither rising nor setting.

53. Since the imperfections of attachment and the like are not in me, I am above the suffering of the body. Know me to be infinite, like unto space, one Atman.

54. O my mind, my friend, many words are not needful, and the world comprehends not reason. In a word, I have told thee the essence of truth: "thou art Truth, thou art as space."

55. In whatever place and in whatever state the Yogi dies, his spirit is absorbed into That, as, on the destruction of the jar, the space in the jar is united with absolute space.

56. Whether he dies conscious or in coma, in a holy temple or in the house of an untouchable, he obtains liberation, becoming the all-pervading Brahman.

57. The Yogis regard righteousness, prosperity, desire for Paradise and liberation, and also the moving and fixed objects, as mere will-o'-the-wisps.

58. The Avadhut in unshakable equanimity, living in the holy temple of nothingness, walks naked, knowing all to be Brahman.

59. Where there is no "Third" or "Fourth¹⁵", where all is known as Atman, where there is neither righteousness nor unrighteousness, how can there be either bondage or liberation?

¹⁵ These are states of consciousness. There are waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. The "Fourth" is the substratum of these three, also called Turya, beyond this is the absolute, beyond words and experience, Turyatita.

CHAPTER II

The Avadhut said:

1. Hold not the immature, the credulous, the foolish, the slow, the layman and the fallen to have nothing good in them. They all teach something. Learn from them. Surely we do not give up a game although we have mastered it?
2. Think not lightly of thy Guru should he lack letters and learning. Take the Truth he teaches and ignore the rest. Know well that a boat, painted and adorned, will carry you across the river; so also will one that is plain and simple.
3. The higher intelligence which without effort pervades the movable and the immovable, and which by nature is all peace and consciousness, that am I.
4. How can the one supreme consciousness which without effort rules the living and the inert and is all-pervasive, be other than I?
5. I am more subtle than primordial substance, beyond elements and compounds, free from birth and death, above duality and unity.
6. The modifications of the inner organ (antahkarana) have no part in me. Like bubbles rising and falling in a river, thoughts and volitions rise and disappear in the inner organ.
7. As softness is not perceived apart from soft objects, as sweetness is not known apart from honey, as bitterness is not known apart from the Nim tree¹⁶, as fluidity and coolness are the nature of water, so the primordial form of matter called mahat¹⁷ is no other than the Self (Atman). As the rays of the sun differ not from the sun, so matter does not differ from God.
8. How can "I" or "thou" be said of Brahman which is more subtle than mahat, free from all attributes, greater than all, above the range of mind and emotion, without medium or limitation, lord of the universe? It can neither be called static or dynamic.
9. As space cannot be compared with another space, so Brahman being above duality, cannot be compared with any object. Brahman alone is perfection, taintless, all knowledge.
10. It walks not on the earth, the wind cannot move It, the water cannot cover It, It stands in the midst of Light.
11. It pervades space-time. Nothing pervades It. From limitations ever free, eternally the same, with nothing outside It and nothing within, It abides.
12. Atman, of which the high Yogis speak, most subtle, beyond perception, without attributes, must be realized step by step, and not by sudden violence.

¹⁶ Nim tree - a tropical Indian tree whose leaves have an extremely bitter taste.

¹⁷ Mahat - Cosmic Mind.

13. Ever practicing Yoga¹⁸, not depending on any object, the Yogi merges his consciousness in Brahman, and becomes Brahman.

14. There is but one antidote to the poison of passions, which beget infatuation and are highly dangerous, and that is to return to the state of Atman. Atman is unapproachable by the emotions, is ever formless and independent.

15. Hidden in the realm of eternal consciousness lies the world's cause, which is prakriti. Within this cause is Brahman. The husk of a coconut is the world, the pulp is prakriti, and the sweet cool water encased in the pulp is Brahman.

16. Like the full moon is Atman. See It in all. Duality is the product of defective vision. As there is only one moon so there is only one Atman in all.

17. No duality can touch the conception of Brahman, because It is all-pervasive. The wise who teach this acquire boundless patience, and their disciples can never be too thankful to them.

18. The talented as well as the witless attain the state of desirelessness by knowing the mystery of Atman, through the grace of their spiritual teacher.

19. This transcendent state of consciousness (Nirvana) is reached by those who are free from attachment and aversion, ever engaged in doing good to all living beings, whose knowledge is firmly rooted, and who are patient.

20. The Yogi is merged in the divine after leaving the body, as the jar-space is merged in cosmic space on the destruction of the jar.

21. The statement that the future condition is determined by the state of the thoughts at death is made of the uninitiated, not the initiated.

22. The knower of Brahman may leave his body in a holy place, or in the house of an untouchable, he is absorbed into Brahman.

23. When a Yogi has realized Atman, which is his true Self, birthless and beyond the range of the mind and emotions, then the karmas¹⁹ no longer touch him. He may perform the rituals or leave them. To him it is all one.

24. Atman realized is the master of creation, eternal, indestructible, formless, without dimensions, absolutely independent, without pleasure or pain, full of all powers.

25. The wise discover that Atman is not seen either by the study of the Vedas, by initiations, by shaving the head, or by being a Guru or chela (an approved disciple). Nor is it seen through postures.

18 Yoga - Practice of mind control, detachment and meditation.

19 Karma - Actions and their consequences.

26. That God, Atman, by whose power the whole universe is born, in which it abides and to which it finally returns like bubbles and waves in the sea, is realized by the wise.
27. Atman, which the wise realize, is not the aim of control of breath (pranayama) nor of the postures of Hatha Yoga²⁰. In It there is neither knowledge nor ignorance.
28. There is neither unity nor duality in Atman, nor unity-duality, neither smallness nor greatness, neither emptiness nor fullness. All these exist in the mind, and the mind is not Atman.
29. The teacher cannot teach Atman; the disciple cannot learn it.

20 The methods of Hatha Yoga, the Yoga of physical austerities and exercises.

CHAPTER III

1. How shall I worship that Atman great
Which is neither personal nor impersonal.
Taintless, above love and aversion, uncreated,
All pervasive, of the form of the universe,
Having no attributes, yet not attributeless
That all-bliss Shiva, my Self.
2. How shall I bow down to mine own Self
In my own Self and by my Self?
I have no colours, white or yellow;
Eternal Shiva am I.
3. I am rootless, and without root,
Free from smoke, and smokeless am I,
Without a lamp, and lightless am I,
Equanimity am I, like a sun ever risen.
4. How can I name the passionless, desireless One
As having desires? The Absolute cannot
Be described in terms of conditions;
How can I speak of myself?
I am neither with an essence,
Nor am I without an essence.
Space-like all equanimity am I.
5. How shall I say that non-duality
Is all this creation, or that, or that?
Even if it be duality, then too I cannot
Attribute creation or dissolution to It.
How can the Eternal, the All
Be expressed in any way?
Space-like, all-bliss am I.
6. Neither gross nor subtle is my Atman;
It comes not, and It goes not;
Without a beginning and without an end;
Neither higher nor lower is It;
That Truth absolute, space-like,
Immortality-giving knowledge am I.
7. Know well that all the senses
Are as space, and so also their objects.
Know that the One is taintless,
The One is neither bound nor free.
That all-pervasive ever-blissful Shiva,
Immortality-giving knowledge am I.

8. The knowledge of the Self, hard to obtain,
Which is experienced, is not Atman;
The object of meditation,
Hard to concentrate upon, is not Atman;
That which is near, and that which is far, far away,
Is not Atman. Space-like, all-bliss
Shiva am I, Shiva am I.
9. Without karma am I, I burn up karmas;
Without pain am I, I burn up sufferings;
Bodiless, homeless am I, and yet I burn up these,
All equanimity, space-like am I.
10. The seed of the plant of the world exists not in me,
Contentment and pleasures exist not in me;
Bondage and ignorance are not in me;
Space-like, absolute Shiva am I.
11. Atman is not the Knower
Nor is It the known.
It is not accessible to inference.
Words cannot describe
This Consciousness Absolute.
The mind is lost in Its majesty.
How can It be explained to thee?
Space-like immortality-giving knowledge am I.
12. There is no separation and no unity in It.
Neither is It inner nor outer.
It is Truth transcendental.
It cannot be said “It was all before.”
Verily nothing exists but Atman.
And that space-like immortality-giving
Knowledge am I.
13. I am the eternal principle.
Free from attachment and aversion,
Free from imperfections am I,
Fate and providence exist not in me.
Eternally free from the sufferings of the world,
Verily, space-like immortality-giving
Knowledge am I.
14. As the three states of consciousness
Exist not in Atman,
How can It be the Fourth?
Free from past, present and future
How can the cardinal points exist in IT?
Eternal peace, space-like transcendental
Truth am I.

15. Neither father nor mother have I,
Neither wife nor child.
Birth and death I do not know.
The mind is not my own.
Eternal peace, space-like transcendental
Peace am I.
16. Devas and Gods, like Indra and Brahma,
Have no place in Atman.
Neither Paradise nor Heaven exist in Atman.
The one taintless transcendental Truth am I.
17. The saying of the Shruti “not this, not this”
Does not apply to Atman.
How can it be said “When all is subtracted
Atman alone remains”?
It is symbolical but not a symbol;
Yet even this cannot be said of Atman.
Space-like, the water of immortality am I.
18. Maya is not my modification.
Nor is its glamour mine.
Deceit and hypocrisy, truth and untruth
Have no place in me.
Space-like, immortality-giving knowledge am I.

CHAPTER IV

1. Nothing can be added or taken away from the Universal Consciousness. It cannot be invoked or worshipped with flowers and leaves. Meditations and Mantrams cannot reach It. How could It be worshipped as Shiva for in It there are neither distinctions nor unity?
2. In the One there is neither bondage nor salvation, neither purity nor impurity. From union and separation the One is free. That space-like Truth am I.
3. As in reality I am Nirvana, thoughts as to the reality and unreality of the world trouble me not at all.
4. Eternally free from the taint of ignorance as I am, knowledge or illusion never had birth in me. How can I say whether I am bound or free?
5. Neither sin nor virtue ever existed in me; by nature I am Nirvana. Neither the worshiper nor the worshipped am I. No instructions and no rituals are there for me. Knowledge also am I not. By nature I am Nirvana.
6. Taintless Nirvana am I; I am neither the comprehender nor the comprehended. Neither the cause nor the effect exist in me.
7. Neither am I a body, nor am I bodiless. The buddhi²¹, the mind and the senses are not mine. How can I talk of attachment and detachment, since I am taintless Nirvana?
8. In me exist not birth, death, purity, impurity, poison or the water of immortality. Verily I am free even from the taint of Nirvana. I cannot speak of the “Third” or the “Fourth”.
9. Neither a fool nor a pundit am I, neither silent nor of many words; how can I speak of reasoning or argument since I am free even from the taint of Nirvana?
10. Giving up all meditations, all good and evil karma, drinking the water of immortality, the heros know that I from the taint of Nirvana am free.
11. No ritualist injunction is binding on me; mind, the seat of anxieties, does not exist in me. Far, far from me also is egotism. Space-like, immortality-giving knowledge absolute am I.
12. I cannot say whether the world is nothingness or if it is partly real and partly unreal, or, if like a flowing river though ever changing, it is in fact real as a whole. Space-like immortality-giving knowledge absolute am I.
13. There is not the least shadow of name or form in the Infinite, nor is there unity or diversity in me. O my shameless mind, why createst thou a confusion? Space-like immortality-giving knowledge absolute am I.

²¹ Buddhi - The higher mind which includes the discriminative faculty and intuitive reason.

14. O my friend, there is no cause for disquietude since thou art not the body. Thou art imperishable and eternal, then why criest thou? Rest in peace. Space-like, immortality-giving knowledge absolute am I.

15. Why art thou troubled, O friend, since avarice, lust, attachment, are not in thee? Space-like, immortality-giving knowledge absolute am I.

16. Why this craving for power, O companion, when in truth wealth is not thine. "Mine" and "thine" are not in thee.

17. In thy heart there is no meditator, there is no Samadhi, nor is there any possibility of meditation in Atman. Time and causation never existed in thee.

18. I have told the, o disciple, the essence of Truth. There is no "thou" nor "I", no world, no Guru, or disciple. Know that by nature I am freedom absolute. I am transcendental Truth.

19. When Atman, the absolute existence, alone is, and It is I, then where is transcendental Truth, where is bliss, where is knowledge, secular or spiritual?

20. Unknown to fire, water and earth, motionless, all-pervasive as space, knowledge absolute know thy Atman to be.

21 Renounce, renounce the world, and also renounce renunciation, and even give up the absence of renunciation. By nature all-pervasive as space, knowledge absolute art thou.

CHAPTER V

1. The syllable OM spoken is the essence of the lower and the higher knowledge. It is Brahman, space-like. There is neither existence nor non-existence in this world. Brahman is ever free from duality.
2. Thou art that Atman of which the Shruti says, “Tat Twam Asi²².” Know that thou art free from maya. Cry not, o mind, verily thou art all.
3. There is neither higher nor lower in thee. Thou pervadest all equally, and there is neither inner nor outer. Then why mournest thou, O mind? All, all is Brahman.
4. Neither that which is imagined, nor the imagination exist in thee; know that cause and effect touch thee not. Free from words and all expressions art thou, eternally the same. O mind, cry not.
5. To know that there is neither higher nor lower in Atman is Samadhi; to know that Atman is ever free from time and space is Samadhi. Cry not, O mind, all is Brahman.
6. As there is no jar, there is no jar space. As there is no jiva body, no conditioning medium²³, there is no jiva. The cause and effect which produce conditions do not exist in Atman. Why then dost thou cry, O my mind?
7. It is all one whether we live in a hut in retirement, or in a house with many kinfolk, for Atman is free from the multitude as from solitude. Free also is It from knowledge, theoretical and practical, Atman being All, O my mind, cry not.

22 Tat Twam Asi - That thou Art.

23 The conditioning of consciousness to form the individual soul (jiva) encased in the human body is compared to the apparent enclosure of space in a jar. As jars do not really limit space, so the conditioning medium of body and mind cannot limit Atman.

CHAPTER VI

1. The whole universe is a projection of the mind; therefore it is a mode of the mind. The true nature of the mind is bliss, and when the mind is stilled, bliss absolute is revealed.
2. Consciousness absolute, being unknowable by the mind, how can speech explain it?
3. The Self is free from day and night, and therefore the conception of its pilgrimage in time and space is no true one.
4. No sun illuminates Atman; the fire and the moon cannot shine therein. It is not equanimity or even desirelessness; how then can action exist in it?
5. Neither can it be said that It is to be known by the absence of action. It is neither within or without. It is naught but bliss absolute.
6. How can it be said that It is the first or that It is the last, since It is neither element or compound, nor emptiness nor fullness? Eternal, ever the same, the essence of all is Shiva.
7. The statement that Atman is describable or indescribable cannot stand. Neither is It the knower nor the known. It cannot be imagined or defined. How can we say that It has a mind or any of the senses?
8. Space, time, water, fire, earth, constituting the world, are a mere mirage. In truth the One, imperishable, ever blissful, alone exists. There is neither cloud nor water in It.
9. As there is no possibility of birth and death in It, so no conception of duty nor dereliction of duty can be applied to It. That undifferentiated, eternal, all-pervasive Shiva alone is.
10. The modifications of primordial matter and of individualized consciousness are in the realm of cause and effect. When there is eternal all-pervasive Shiva alone, how can there be matter or spirit therein?
11. There is in It no suffering, and no possibility of suffering, because It is free from all attributes.
12. There is no duality in It. How can there be age, or youth, or childhood in that One eternal principle?
13. Atman is dependent on nothing and is unlimited. The law of cause and effect touches It not. How can the buddhi, which operates only in duality, and which is perishable, discern It?
14. It grasps not, nor is It grasped. It is not born nor does It bring forth. We can only say that in It there is no destruction.
15. In Atman there is neither manhood nor womanhood, because such conceptions cannot exist in eternity.

16. There is no pleasure in It, and no faculty of enjoying pleasure, since It is free from such defects as attachment. Equally free from doubts and suffering, one and eternal is Shiva; thus the conception of "I" and "mine" do not apply to It.

17. Neither is there Brahman in It, nor the absence of Brahman. Since It alone exists and is eternity, it must follow that It is free from pain, and also from freedom from pain.

18. There is no gain and there is no loss. Infatuation and worldly wisdom have no place therein. When the eternal consciousness alone exists, how can discrimination or wisdom, or any such thing be contained in It?

19. In It there is no "thou" and no "I", therefore family and caste exist not therein. It is neither true nor untrue. Neither is It of this world nor of the next. How then can one pray to It?

20. Illusory is the connection of the learner and the teacher. Teaching and contemplation, when thus beheld, are not admissible. "Verily, I am Shiva." This alone is the whole Truth. How then can I pray to It, or worship It?

21. The body itself is imagined in Atman, as is the whole universe. Atman is free from all differentiations. Then since I am Shiva, there can be no idea of prayer or worship.

22. Consciousness absolute has no body. It cannot be said that It is without a body or attributes. All that can be said is that It is bliss absolute, and that bliss am I. This is the height of worship, and this is the culmination of all prayer.

23. The Avadhut who has realized this mystery of all mysteries, and has risen to the state of unceasing and perfect bliss, moves about in the crowds unconcerned, radiating bliss and higher knowledge.

24. He is clothed in a habit of old and worn. He walks in a path that is free from religious merit or sin. He lives in the temple of absolute emptiness. His soul is naked, and free from all taints and modifications of maya.

25. The Avadhut has no ideal, neither strives he after the attainment of an ideal. Having lost his identity in Atman, free from the limitations of maya, free also from the perfections of Yoga, thus walks the Avadhut. He argues with no one, he is not concerned with any object or person.
21

26. Free from the snares of expectations and hopes, he has cast off the worn-out garments of purity, righteousness, and all ideals. His path is free from any such consideration. It can only be said about him that he is purity absolute, and is far, far above the clouds of maya and ignorance.

27. He has no such thoughts as "I am not in the body," or "I am not the body." He has no aversion, attachment or infatuation towards any object or person. Pure as space he walks, immersed in the immaculate bliss of his natural state.

28. The Avadhut may be compared to immeasurable space. He is eternity. In him is neither purity nor impurity. There is no variety nor unity in him; no bondage nor absence of bondage.

29. Free from separation and union, free from enjoyment or absence of enjoyment, he moves calm and unhurried through the world. Having given up all activity of the mind, he is in his normal state of indescribable bliss.

30. Atman, with which the Avadhut has found natural unity, is limitless and inconceivable. It is unknowable by the mind. It is neither a part nor is It divided. It cannot be said, "So far is its province and no farther." Verily, it is hard to describe and hard to obtain.

31. The Avadhut is not concerned with the things of the world, because the natural state of Self-realization renders all else insignificant. Death and birth have no meaning; he meditates not, neither does he worship.

32. All this world is a magic show, like a mirage in the desert. Concentrated bliss, alone and secondless, is Shiva and that is the Avadhut.

33. The wise man strives not for anything, not even for Dharma²⁴ or liberation. He is free from all actions and movements, and also from desire and renunciation.

34. What do they, the pundits, know of him? Even the Vedas cannot speak of him perfectly. That bliss absolute, ever indestructible, but a source of bliss to all, is the Avadhut.

24 The law of unity and righteousness.

CHAPTER VII

1. When as a pilgrim, I began to journey towards Thee, then my little notions of all-pervasiveness of Atman died.
2. When my mind began to meditate on Thee, it lost all interest in objects. When my tongue began to praise Thee it lost the power of praising others. I forgot my three great sins.
3. He whose buddhi is no longer attracted towards desires and pleasures, whose nature has become joyful and compassionate, he who, even in his heart, has no idea of possessions, who is ever peaceful and most temperate in all things and is not moved by any happenings and events - that Muni²⁵ takes refuge in Atman. Ever watchful, solemn as the ocean and full of patience.
4. He who has conquered the feelings of pleasure, wrath, avarice, attachment, vanity and aversion, this one is peace itself, and free from all pride.
5. Efficient in his undertakings, full of compassion is the sadhu²⁶; he gives pity to all, has enmity towards no one.
6. He bears patiently heat and cold, seeing the one Self enlightening all bodies. He walks solitary as a rhinoceros²⁷. He has become an ocean of Truth and is ever engaged in the work of mercy. Such is the Avadhut, free from birth and death.
7. The knowers of God will know the meaning of the word AVADHUT by the four letters which form it, A, V, Dh, T.
8. A stands for freedom from the snares of hopes and expectations, pure in the beginning, in the middle and the end, merged in Self-bliss.
9. V stands for the rooting out of all desires after pleasure, subtle or material, and for life in the present as all-sufficient, the present being eternity.
10. Dh is the physical body, covered with dirt and dust, but with the mind ever pure, and the heart ever still, above contemplation and meditation.
11. T is the unceasing contemplation of the eternal Truth, and indifference to the activities of the mind and senses. It also bespeaks freedom from egoism and pride.
12. Woe to them that give up this knowledge of the wisdom of Atman, which in itself constitutes eternal freedom and joy throughout all worlds, and turn to the realms of limited pleasure and of ignorance.

25 Muni - A sage.

26 Sadhu - A holy man.

27 In the East the rhinoceros is a symbol of detachment, solemnity and peace.

13. Those who are desirous of acquiring this eternal bliss and of communicating it to others through their teaching, must give up all sensuous pleasures, more especially those which arise from sex union.

14. The body is made up of impure elements, of blood, flesh, bones and the like. Woe to those who are attached to it, and indifferent to the ever blissful Atman.

15. There are three kinds of wine, produced from syrup, grain and honey. But there is a fourth, the darkest of all, the wine of sex, which has intoxicated the whole world.

16. When the mind is uncontrolled, then the body, which is the object of affection to the ignorant, also suffers, and when the mind is controlled, then the body also remains in good estate.

17. Wherefore, all ye lovers of wisdom, protect your minds from feelings of pleasure, and engage them in spiritual wisdom.

18. This is the song of the great Dattatreya Avadhut. Those who read it and hear it with respectful attention, they are not reborn on this earth.

*"Blessed am I; in freedom am I.
I am the infinite in my soul;
I can find no beginning, no end.
All is my Self....."*